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SUBJECT: FIJI LEAHY REPORTING: CREDIBLE EVIDENCE OF GROSS
HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS BY RFMF AND POLICE PERSONNEL

REF: 08 SUVA 157

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Richard Pruett. Reasons 1.5 (b)
and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Embassy Suva submits the following credible evidence of gross human rights violations by members of the Republic of Fiji Military Forces and the Fiji Police. We have listed the individuals by name and then included a summary of the human rights abuses for which there is credible evidence of involvement. All are Fiji nationals. However, in most cases we lack other identifying information such as dates of birth.

Christmas Eve 2006 Detention, Assaults and Abuse

¶2. (C) At midnight on Christmas Eve 2006, six pro-democracy activists were forcibly removed from their homes and taken to the RFMF headquarters at Queen Elizabeth Barracks in Suva. According to independent statements by several of the individuals, during the course of the night, RFMF personnel subjected them to humiliating and degrading treatment, including physical assault and verbal abuse. They were beaten, punched, kicked, and made to crawl on all fours in the rain. One woman was allegedly asked whether she was pregnant and after she replied in the affirmative, a soldier stood on her stomach. One man was allegedly asked who was Fiji's president, and upon answering (then-deposed) Ratu Iloilo,8 was repeatedly kicked by the soldiers. Another woman said that RFMF soldiers blindfolded her, put an unloaded gun to her temple and fired repeatedly. The group was then forced to run in the rain from the military camp to a location several miles away, where they were compelled to remove anti-coup slogans from the walls of a house. Before release, RFMF soldiers allegedly warned them that if they spoke out again they would be taken back up to the military camp and suffer worse treatment, as would their families.

¶3. (C) While much of the alleged abuse was perpetrated by lower ranking and unknown RFMF soldiers, those detained reported that the following high ranking RFMF personnel were present, orchestrated and in some cases perpetrated the abuse:

(1) Tevita Ului Mara, Colonel, Chief of Staff, Land Force, and Commanding Officer of the RFMF Third Infantry Regiment, DOB: 25 May 1965

(2) Pita Driti, Colonel, Land Forces Commander, DOB: 29 October 1960

(3) Sitiveni Qiliho Tukaituraga, Colonel, DOB: 30 December, 1969

The Death of Sakiusa Rabaka Following Detention by the RFMF

¶4. (C) On January 24, 2007, RFMF and police personnel detained four young men, including 19-year old Sakiusa Rabaka, ostensibly for smoking marijuana. They took the men to the Black Rock Military Base, near Nadi, and forced the men to participate in severe exercises, which included multiple beatings. Among many indignities, the soldiers

forced one man to perform oral sex on an unconscious co-detainee. The four were dropped off at a police station the following day, where they confessed to their crimes, and then released. Rabaka died as a result of injuries sustained during the assaults.

15. (C) The RFMF attempted to frustrate the criminal investigation into this incident. The army refused to allow the police to interview eight RFMF soldiers suspected of involvement. The police then lost the file, necessitating that much of the investigation be redone. The DPP ultimately charged eight RFMF soldiers and one police officer with murder, at which point the RFMF tried to send them abroad on a UN peacekeeping mission. The attempt was nearly successful, with only a last minute intervention resulting in the accused being asked to de-board a UN chartered airplane at the airport. Following trial, all nine were convicted of manslaughter and assault occasioning actual bodily harm on March 17, 2009 and sentenced to four years, imprisonment.

16. (C) The following RFMF soldiers based at the RFMF,s Black Rock Base in Nadi in February 2007 were convicted:

- (1) Taione Lua;
- (2) Ulaiasi Radike;
- (3) Etonia Nadura;
- (4) Ratunaisa Toutou;
- (5) Joeli Lesavua;
- (6) Jona Nareki;
- (7) Laisa Kurimavua
- (8) Napolioni Naulia

Patrick Nayacalagilagi, a police officer at the Namaka Police Station in February 2007, was also convicted.

The Death of Tevita Malasebe in Police Custody

17. (C) Tevita Malasebe was beaten to death at the Valelevu Police Station on June 4, 2007, after being arrested on suspicion of robbery. His bruised body was delivered to the Suva mortuary the following morning. The police ultimately charged seven persons with murder and an eighth policeman with obstruction of justice. At trial, the pathologist reported evidence of assault with wooden planks and torture marks on the soles of the feet. The court ultimately convicted detectives Lole Vulaca and Rusiate Korovusere of murder. One person was convicted as accessory after the fact for attempts to cover up the crime. The remaining members of the Fiji Police Force were acquitted:

- (1) Detective Lole Vulaca
- (2) Detective Rusiate Korvusere

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